era in the hiſtory of civilization. A little reflection will ſuffice to convince us, how awkward the operations of induſtry muſt be, and what a rude ſcene human life would ſoon exhibit, without the uſe of metals. The hand of man is the organ of his power, and metals are the weapon in his hand with which he extends his dominion. Nature completes the formation of ſome metals. Gold, ſilver, and copper, are found, in their perfect ſtate, in the clefts of rocks, in the ſides of mountains, or the channels of rivers. Theſe accordingly were the metals firſt known, and firſt applied to uſe. Among the Egyptians, in the early period of their hiſtory; in Spain, when it was viſited by the Carthaginians; in America, when it was diſcovered by the Spaniards; their arms, utenſils, and tools, were made of gold, ſilver, and copper. But iron, the moſt uſeful of all metals, is concealed by nature: It is never diſcovered in its perfect form. The ore indeed is ſcattered over the earth, but it is difficult to diſtinguiſh it from ſtones or gravel of no value. It muſt twice undergo the force of fire, and paſs through two laborious proceſſes, before it becomes fit for uſe. Ages muſt have revolved in ſociety, a ſeries of accidents muſt have

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have taken place, a multitude of experiments, been made and repeated, before this valuable diſcovery was known. From conſulting the records of hiſtory, and digging up the inſtruments of our forefathers, we learn, that mankind endeavoured to ſupply the want of this metal by flints, bones, and ſea-ſhells. What are called thunder-ſtones, have been found all over Europe, and are ſtill preſerved in the cabinets of the curious: They are made of a hard and almoſt impenetrable flint, and have the ſhape of axes, ploughſhares, hammers, and wedges. Such tools of ſtone were frequent over all the continent of America. We learn from Homer, that iron was very little uſed in the time of the Trojan war. Copper ſupplied its place: Arms and tools of every kind were made of this metal. A ſimilar uſage prevailed among the Romans for many ages. Hence religion, which is ever tenacious of antient cuſtoms, retained the uſe of braſs in all the ſacred ceremonies. Society can never make great advances without the uſe of iron. It is the inſtrument of univerſal induſtry; and without it, the genius of man muſt languiſh, and the arts be impeded in their career. Early in poſſeſſion of this diſcovery, the Egyptians were

were enabled to proſecute inventions. Maſters of this art, they applied with advantage to other improvements. CHAP. II.

In the moſt remote periods of hiſtory, we find the arts of luxury and ornament flouriſhing in Egypt. Precious ſtuffs, embroidered garments, vaſes of gold and ſilver, gems, jewels, and all the apparatus of magnificence, announce a poliſhed and refined people.

A peculiar taſte for architecture has diſtinguiſhed them from every people of the world.

Architecture.

What hiſtory records of their buildings would ſurpaſs credibility, were it not atteſted by their monuments, which remain to this day. Egypt is a ſcene of antiquities; walking among ruins, the traveller forgets the preſent to contemplate the paſt, and, amid the traces of a degenerate race, marks the remains of a mighty nation. Their buildings are ſtill ſublime. The pyramids of Egypt have always ranked among the wonders of the world. Three of them ſtill remain, at the diſtance of ſome leagues from Grand Cairo, where Memphis formerly ſtood. The largeſt of the three, called the Great Pyramid, forms a ſquare, each ſide of whoſe baſe is 640 feet. The circumference is 2640 feet. The baſis covers eleven acres

The pyramids.

of

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of ground. The perpendicular height is about 450 feet; if meaſured obliquely, [illegible] ſummit, which viewed from below appears a point, was a platform, each ſide of which was 18 feet long. The ſtones with which this enormous edifice was built were 30 feet in length. A hundred thouſand workmen were conſtantly employed in carrying on this amazing ſtructure. Thirty years were ſpent in erecting this immenſe fabric. The ſum expended for food to the workmen amounted to 1600 talents, which, comparing the value of money in thoſe days with what it is at preſent, amounts to more than two hundred thouſand pounds ſterling.

THE original deſtination of theſe moſt antient monuments of human ingenuity, and which are likely to laſt coeval with the works of nature, according to the teſtimony of all antiquity, was to contain the embalmed bodies of the firſt monarchs of Egypt. The obſervation of Strabo *, that towards the middle of the height of one of the ſides, by raiſing a ſtone, an oblique paſſage is opened, which leads to the coffin of a king, in the centre of the pyramid, forms a ſtriking proof of the antient belief on this ſubject, and is confirmed by every obſervation which has been made on

* Lib. xvii.

theſe

theſe ſtupendous ſtructures. The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the ſoul, but alſo in the re-animation of the body, after a long period of years: Hence their extraordinary attention to embalm and preſerve the uncorrupted bodies of their departed heroes and deceaſed friends. CHAP. II.

THESE majeſtic monuments deſcend from an unknown antiquity. Herodotus, who wrote 2000 years ago, ſpeaks with as much uncertainty about the time when they were conſtructed as we do at preſent.

OTHER proofs remain of their very high antiquity. While all the remarkable edifices in Egypt are covered with hieroglyphical inſcriptions, no traces of that Egyptian mode of writing appears on the pyramids, becauſe they were erected before hieroglyphical writing was cultivated. A ſtronger proof of their age ſtill remains. The general idea of Egyptian architecture was intirely taken from the pyramids; which nothing but their high veneration for them, increaſed by their remote antiquity, could poſſibly have occaſioned; ſince the figure of theſe fabrics, ſo well adapted to triumph over time, is inconvenient for habitable ſtructures, whether public or private. Yet we find, from the antient ruins of the Higher Egypt,

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Egypt, that all the buildings, without exception, were raiſed on the model of the pyramids. We are ſurpriſed to find not only their ports, their doors, but even the walls of their temples and of their towns, inclining to this form *.

The labyrinth.

THE labyrinth was, if poſſible, more aſtoniſhing than the pyramids. The ſame circuit of walls incloſed 3000 apartments, twelve of which were of a particular form and beauty. They communicated with each other by ſo many turns and windings, that without a guide the traveller was loſt. One half of the chambers was under-ground: The labyrinth terminated in a pyramid forty fathoms high.

The obeliſks.

THE obeliſks are in the ſame grand ſtile, but of a ſingular compoſition. The firſt models were erected by Seſoſtris, as monuments of his victories: They conſiſted of one piece of granite, and were 180 feet high. The Romans, in the era of their grandeur, tranſported ſome of theſe monuments to their city; two of them ſtill remain, and, for their antiquity and grandeur, rank among the greateſt curioſities in Rome.

WORKS of a ſimilar form, or in the ſame

* Norden.

ſtile

ſtile with the pyramids of Egypt, were found at Babylon, and in ſeveral parts of the eaſt. CHAP. II.

THE fine arts are imitative: The great original is nature. In the early periods of ſociety, before the earth is cultivated and improved by the human hand, the works of nature ſtrike by their greatneſs, rather than pleaſe by their beauty: Hence an incorrect idea of grandeur prevails in the firſt compoſitions of all nations of whatever kind. Aiming at the vaſt and the gigantic, they ſtudy to fill the eye, rather than to pleaſe it.

SCULPTURE and painting originated among the Egyptians, but made very inconſiderable progreſs. Neither genius nor taſte appear in their works of this kind. They are equally awkward and incorrect: They knew not how to deſign ſimple figures, nor to group their compoſitions. Sculpture and painting.

THEY formed their ſtatues by the rules of mathematics, rather than on the principles of taſte. The Egyptian ſculptors, according to Diodorus, were accuſtomed to work a ſtatue by ſeparate pieces. They began by making a model of clay. They cut this model into ſeveral pieces; every artiſt took away the part that was allotted to him, and worked after

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after that pattern. This was reducing a fine art to mere mechanical labour.

THEIR paintings were as imperfect as their ſculptures. Their pictures are flat and mean, without any riſe, or oppoſition of colours. A heavineſs, monotony, and incorrectneſs, prevail through the whole. Their hieroglyphics contributed to ſpoil their taſte in painting. By drawing human heads upon the trunks of animals, and the heads of animals upon human bodies, they diſcompounded being, and multiplied monſters. Hence Apuleius and Ammianus Marcellinus, talking of theſe figures, call them "animals of another world." In the time of the Ptolemies Egypt was adorned with elegant buildings, with fine ſtatues and beautiful pictures; but theſe were executed by Grecian artiſts.

IN one particular the Egyptian painters excelled; a certain preparation they made uſe of for fixing colours upon marble, and other ſmooth bodies. Travellers aſſure us that in many edifices, half in ruins, there are ſtill paintings to be ſeen, whoſe gloſs and colouring are ſo lively, ſo freſh, and ſo bright, that it ſeems, ſay the inhabitants of the country, as if the artiſt had not yet waſhed his hands after his work.

THE

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THE invention of alphabetical letters, and the art of writing, is generally attributed by the antients to the Egyptians. This wonderful art, by which words and thoughts have been painted, by which the inventions and exploits of antiquity have been perpetuated and preſerved, and by which the archives of hiſtory, and the diſcoveries of philoſophy, may be communicated to all ages, refers its origin to the Egyptian prieſts. This nobleſt and moſt beneficial invention, of which human ingenuity can boaſt, and which has contributed ſo much to the improvement of the ſpecies, was imperfect in its origin, and advanced to perfection ſlowly, and by a gradual progreſſion. Picture-writing, or a rude repreſentation of external objects, was the firſt ſtep in this progreſs. This mode of recording events prevailed among the antient nations in the infancy of ſociety; and was known to the natives of America when it was diſcovered. Such awkward delineations repreſent things, not words; they exhibit images to the eye, not ideas to the underſtanding: They may therefore be conſidered as the earlieſt and moſt imperfect eſſay of men in their progreſs towards diſcovering the art of writing. The defects in this mode of recording tranſactions muſt

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muſt have been ſoon felt. To paint every occurrence was from its nature a very tedious operation, and as affairs became more complicated, and events multiplied in ſociety, its annals muſt have ſwelled to an enormous bulk. Beſides this, no objects could be delineated but thoſe of ſenſe; the conceptions of the mind had no corporeal form, and as picture-writing could not convey an idea of theſe, it was a very imperfect art. The neceſſity of improving it rouſed and ſharpened invention, and by ſucceſſive ſteps the human genius advanced, firſt, from the actual picture to the plain hieroglyphic, next to the allegorical ſymbol, then to the arbitrary character; until at length an alphabet of letters was diſcovered, capable of expreſſing all the variety of combinations of ſound employed in ſpeech. Nothing is more ſimple in appearance, or more profound in reality, than this laſt invention. A ſmall number of characters, repreſenting every articulate ſound of the human voice, ſerves to expreſs all the thoughts, emotions, and paſſions of men, and contains diſtinctly, in a ſmall ſpace, what could not be done by an infinite number of hieroglyphics, but with obſcurity and confuſion. The date of this diſcovery is unknown, but aſcends to a high antiquity.

One

One parent alphabet ſuggeſted the idea of all the reſt. The Roman letters, uſed by the modern European nations, were taken from the Greek; the Greek from the Phenicians, whoſe characters are the ſame with thoſe of the Aſſyrians: All originated from the Egyptians, the form of whoſe letters is evidently taken from their hieroglyphics. After the invention of an alphabet, hieroglyphics became a ſacred language among the Egyptians, and were employed by the prieſts, to conceal the principles of their philoſophy, and their diſcoveries, from the view of the vulgar.

Sciences.

EGYPT was the mother of the ſciences as well as the arts. An order of men like the prieſts, devoted to ſtudy and contemplation, had a favourable opportunity to make diſcoveries, and to inveſtigate truth. There were four colleges in Egypt, where ſcience was ſtudied and taught: Thebes, which Pythagoras viſited; Memphis, where Thales and Democritus conſulted the Egyptian prieſts; Heliopolis, where Plato ſtudied; and Sais, where Solon was inſtructed in the principles of legiſlation and government.

Aſtronomy.

THE firſt important diſcoveries in aſtronomy were made by the Egyptians. As they were the firſt people of antiquity who lived

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by cultivating the ground, they were under a neceſſity of ſtudying the motions of the ſtars. The whole buſineſs of agriculture depends upon a knowledge of the ſeaſons, and the courſe of the ſun. In antient times, men had no means of diſcovering the ſeaſons of tillage and culture, but by the riſing and ſetting of particular ſtars. The lights of heaven, according to Moſes, were for ſigns to them, for ſeaſons, for days, and for years. The knowledge of theſe celeſtial ſigns, though little attended to at preſent, was abſolutely neceſſary in the antient world, when the huſbandman had no other guide to direct his labours than his own obſervations. Thus Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades, marked out the ſeveral ſeaſons among the early Greeks *, and the riſing of Syrius with the ſun, announced to the Egyptians the overflowing of the Nile, and the cuſtomary time of ſowing their grain, which was immediately after its retreat.

FROM the poets and hiſtorians of early periods it appears, that the greateſt and moſt poliſhed nations had, for a long time, no other calendar than what was furniſhed by a

* Heſiod, lib. ii.

few

few ſimple obſervations on the riſing and ſetting of certain ſtars. CHAP. II.

THE climate of Egypt is favourable to the ſtudy of this ſcience. Night diſcloſes a thouſand charms, which the inhabitant of a northern region ſeldom beholds. Through a tranſparent veil, which only half conceals the objects in nature, the ſpectator contemplates the azure of a ſerene ſky, and an infinite number of ſtars which beſpangle the firmament. They have a more brilliant light, and appear larger than in temperate climates. Thick darkneſs never covers the atmoſphere: The blaſt of tempeſts never diſturbs its tranquillity. Deluges of rain do not render it the image of chaos. The wind falls uſually with the ſun. Nature remains in a perfect calm. It is then that the aſtronomer who views the heavens, enjoying the ſight of a firmament without clouds, can follow the motion of the ſtars throughout the immenſity of ſpace.

ACCORDINGLY, the Egyptians applied early to this ſtudy. We are informed by Diodorus, that the Thebans had kept regiſters of their aſtronomical obſervations for an aſtoniſhing length of time.

THEIR obeliſks were gnomons for aſtronomical purpoſes, and the ſides of the great py-

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ramid correſpond exactly to the four cardinal points. They were the firſt people of antiquity who adjuſted the length of the year to the annual revolution of the ſun, and determined it to conſiſt of 365 days, and ſix hours. From them the Greeks, and other nations, learned the true duration of the ſolar year. They ſeem to have attained a true notion of the ſyſtem of nature; for they called the moon an ethereal earth, affirmed the ſtars to be fire, and placed the ſun immovable in the centre of the world, round whom the inferior planets revolved. This ſyſtem Pythagoras is ſaid to have introduced into Greece, and communicated to his diſciples. This, however, ſeems rather to have been a happy conjecture, than the genuine offspring of obſervation and of reaſoning. Perhaps the adoration which the Egyptians paid to the ſun, led them to place him at reſt in the centre of the ſyſtem, as the ſtation of dignity, while the planets moved round him in obedient orbits. Diſcoveries which are the conſequence of experience or obſervation, will be continued and ſupported from the ſame cauſes which produced them: But conjectures, unſupported by proof or reaſoning, however ingenious or juſt, will ſoon be forgotten. Ptolemy, the reformer

former of the calendar, who joined the learning of the Greeks to that of the Egyptians, ſeems to have been entirely unacquainted with this important diſcovery. CHAP. II.

Geometry and mathematics.

GEOMETRY and mathematics were cultivated by the Egyptians with conſiderable ſucceſs. All authors agree, that geometry was firſt found out in Egypt; neceſſity having forced the inhabitants to ſurvey with accuracy, and to meaſure their lands, the bounries of which were annually diſturbed by the overflowing of the Nile. The grand works which they conceived and executed, the accurate diviſion of their territory, the diſtribution of the waters of the Nile by an infinite number of canals, the exact meaſurement of the bed of the river, the fabrication of many different machines for the purpoſes of architecture, above all, the computation of time, and the calculation of the revolution of the heavenly bodies, are proofs of the progreſs which they made in theſe ſtudies. The Greeks were indebted to them for their firſt diſcoveries in theſe ſciences. Thales and Pythagoras, as we are informed by Herodotus, did little more than deliver the doctrines which they had learned from the prieſts of Egypt.

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To ſum up their character: Without having attained to elegance in the arts, or perfection in the ſciences, the Egyptians ſtruck out the models on which other nations improved; and philoſophy owes them that reſpect which an empire pays to its founders.

Religion.

AMONG nations who are not bleſſed by divine revelation, the luminaries of heaven are the firſt objects of worſhip. Diodorus Siculus, mentioning the Egyptians, informs us *, "that the firſt men, looking up to the world above them, and ſtruck with admiration at the nature of the univerſe, ſuppoſed the ſun and moon to be the principal and eternal gods." This, which may be called the natural ſuperſtition of mankind, we can trace in the annals of the weſt, as well as of the eaſt; among the inhabitants of the new world, as well as of the old. The ſun and moon, under the names of Iſis and Oſiris, were the chief objects of adoration among the Egyptians. An order of men, like the prieſts of Egypt, who were devoted to ſcience, and ſtudied the phenomena of nature, diſcovered, in the progreſs of time, that theſe were the

* Lib. I.

nobleſt

nobleſt productions and moſt powerful agents of the Divine Power, and began to recognize a ſupreme being, who created the heavens, and preſides over the univerſe. The following inſcription, engraved in hieroglyphics in the temple of Neith, the Egyptian Minerva, conveys the moſt ſublime idea of the Deity which unenlightened reaſon could form! "I AM THAT WHICH IS, WAS, AND SHALL BE; NO MORTAL HATH LIFTED UP MY VEIL; THE OFFSPRING OF MY POWER IS THE SUN." A ſimilar inſcription ſtill remains at Capua, on the temple of Iſis—"THOU ART ONE, AND FROM THEE ALL THINGS PROCEED." Plutarch * alſo informs us, that the inhabitants of Thebais worſhipped only the immortal and ſupreme God, whom they called Eneph. According to their coſmogony all things ſprung from athor, or night, by which they denoted the darkneſs of chaos before the creation. Sanchoniathon relates, that "from the breath of Gods † and the void ‡ were mortals created." This theology differs little from that of Moſes, who ſays, "the earth was without form, and void, darkneſs was upon the face of the deep, and the ſpirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

* De Oſid. and Oſir. † Kolpea. ‡ Baaon.

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THESE ſublime doctrines of their theology the Egyptians concealed in their temples, and taught only to the initiated in the greater myſteries, which Orpheus introduced into Greece, and which were afterwards eſtabliſhed at Rome. Eſteeming them too ſublime for vulgar conception, they favoured the propenſity of the nation to ſuperſtition, and erected their own importance on the ignorance and credulity of the people. As religion was the great engine of government in Egypt, popular ſuperſtition was reduced to a regular ſyſtem; myſtery was affected; ſymbol and allegory were introduced; and ſuch a long train of ceremonies, proceſſions, feſtivals, and ſhews eſtabliſhed, as diſtinguiſhes them from other nations.

Animal worſhip.

A SUPERSTITIOUS reverence for certain animals, as propitious or diſaſtrous to the human race, was not peculiar to the Egyptians. The cow has been venerated in India from the moſt remote antiquity. The ſerpent has been the object of religious reſpect to one half of the nations of the known world. The Romans had ſacred animals, which they kept in their temples, and diſtinguiſhed with peculiar honours. We need not therefore be ſurpriſed, that a nation ſo ſuperſtitious as the

Egyptians,

Egyptians, ſhould honour with peculiar marks of reſpect the ichneumon, the ibis, the dog, the falcon, the wolf, and the crocodile. Theſe they entertained at great expence, and with much magnificence. Lands were ſet apart for their maintenance; perſons of the higheſt rank were employed in feeding and attending them; rich carpets were ſpread in their apartments; and the pomp at their funerals correſponded to the profuſion and luxury which attended them while alive.

WHAT chiefly tended to favour the progreſs of animal-worſhip in Egypt, was the language of hieroglyphics, which prevails in every country before the invention of letters. In the hieroglyphic inſcriptions on their temples and public edifices, animals, and even vegetables, were the ſymbols of the gods whom they worſhipped.

ACCUSTOMED to behold allegorical and ſymbolical figures in the ſanctuary, the people forgot the inviſible object of adoration in the emblem by which it was expreſſed, and ſunk into that ſuperſtition which was ſo congenial to their groſs conceptions. The Greeks and Romans annexed a kind of ſanctity to the images of their gods, and the people even adored them; but while the multitude proſtrated themſelves

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themſelves before the idol, the wife adored the divinity.

In the midſt of innumerable ſuperſtitions, the theology of Egypt contained the two great principles of religion, the exiſtence of a ſupreme being, and the immortality of the ſoul. The firſt is proved by the inſcription on the temple of Minerva; the ſecond by the care with which dead bodies were embalmed, and the prayer recited at the hour of death, by an Egyptian, expreſſing his deſire to be received to the preſence of the deities.

As Egypt was the ſeat of legiſlative wiſdom, and gave birth to law as well as to the arts, it will be requiſite to mention ſome of their laws. Civil law ſhews us the ſtate of property among a people, and their manner of life. As the Egyptians were a buſy and commercial nation, "every inhabitant was obliged to give in his name and profeſſion to the governor of the province where he lived. If he gave in a wrong information, or procured his livelihood in an unlawful way, he was puniſhed with death." Solon introduced a ſimilar law among the Athenians. The ſubject of debts, in many of the antient ſtates, was a ſource of perpetual troubles and commotion. In Egypt every citizen was conſidered

ſidered as belonging to the ſtate, and of conſequence the goods of the debtor, not his perſon, were anſwerable for the debt. Aſychis made an effectual law to give ſecurity to trade. A man might borrow on the pledge of his father's dead body, which was to be put into the hands of the creditor; and if he did not redeem it, he himſelf was to be deprived of the honours of ſepulture; the greateſt ignominy which could befall an Egyptian.

Criminal law.

CRIMINAL law is founded on two original principles in human nature; the reſentment of the ſufferer, when an injury is inflicted; and the feelings of men, when a man is injured. Nature hath conſtituted man the guardian of his own rights, and the avenger of his own wrongs. Revenge is a ſtrong principle of human nature: It is inſtinctive. Men repel harm from immediate impulſe, and wreak their reſentment upon inanimate objects that hurt them. It is the guardian of ſociety, and the preventative of injury and crimes. The object of reſentment is retaliation; is to inflict on the offending perſon the evil that he hath committed. Accordingly, retaliation forms the criminal code of all early nations, and continues in ſome degree through

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through every period of ſociety. Murder is always puniſhed with death. The voice of nature is, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: He that ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed. We find the criminal law of Egypt, either founded on this principle, or alluding to it. Murder was puniſhed with death, whether the perſon ſlain had been free or a ſlave. A calumniator was condemned to the ſame puniſhment; the perſon would have ſuffered, if the accuſation had proved true. The power of life and death, which the father in barbarous ages exerciſes over his family, which always prevailed among the eaſtern nations, and long among the Romans, was early checked in the regular form of government eſtabliſhed among the Egyptians. The authority of a maſter over his ſlaves, and the uſe of torture in their trial, which was only aboliſhed at Rome under the reign of Adrian, never ſeems to have prevailed in Egypt.

LAWS are the ſtandard of a people, with regard to barbarity or refinement. Theſe laws of the Egyptians give us a high idea of their civilization.

Cauſes of the early civilization of Egypt.

THE earlieſt population is on the banks of rivers. The beauty and fertility of Egypt would attract inhabitants to the margin of the Nile.

Nile. The diſaſters which they ſuffered by the overflowing of the river, would lead them to ſtudy the means of guarding againſt ſuch inundations in the time to come. The additional fruitfulneſs, which the land acquired by being thus watered by the Nile, would ſtill allure them; and neceſſity, the great prompter of mankind, would ſuggeſt the means of remedying the evil. While the barbarous tribes in their neighbourhood wandered from region to region, in queſt of new paſtures and more fruitful fields, the inhabitants of Egypt had no occaſion to remove from a country, whoſe fertility was renewed by the annual overflowing of the Nile, and would feel an additional attachment to a ſcene, which was in a great meaſure the work of their own hands. When the principle of improvement is once ſet a-going, ſociety begins its progreſs. CHAP. II.

If we look over the world, we ſhall find that the arts have ariſen in ſimilar ſituations. A ſcene where the favours of nature are to be purchaſed by ingenuity and induſtry calls forth invention; difficulties heighten the ardour of the purſuit; and obſtacles in the way encourage the active and improvable nature of man.

The fineſt and moſt flouriſhing provinces in China were gained from the ſea. Venice, riſing

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riſing from a marſhy lake, was the firſt great maritime power of modern Europe. The barren territory of Attica bloomed with every art, and with every ſcience; while the fertile banks of the Eurotas were inhabited by unlettered barbarians.

2. THE Egyptians early applied to agriculture, which, by introducing the complete idea of property, lays the foundation of law. The moſt nutritious vegetables flouriſh on the banks of the Nile, the light ſoil is eaſily cultivated, and the warm climate gives them two, and ſometimes three, crops in the year. When man, ceaſing to roam, becomes an inhabitant of the ſoil, and a poſſeſſor of land, laws and regulations become neceſſary to tranſmit poſſeſſions, and diſpoſe of inheritances. This gave riſe to eſtabliſhed rights, to juriſprudence, and to the civil code. It is the plough that hath civilized mankind. When the antients gave Ceres the title of legiſlatreſs, and called a feſtival celebrated in her honour by the name of Theſmophoria, they gave the people to underſtand, that agriculture, by eſtabliſhing property, laid the foundation of law. From law ariſes ſecurity; from ſecurity, leiſure; from leiſure, curioſity; from curioſity, the arts and ſciences.

3. EGYPT

3. EGYPT at an early period was croſſed by canals, which connecting the cities with one another, favoured the cultivation of manufactures and arts. Upper Egypt extends no where to a great diſtance from the Nile. In Lower Egypt the river breaks itſelf into many different canals, which, aſſiſted by art, opened a communication by water-carriage, not only with great towns, but with villages, as in Holland at this day. By the extent and facility of inland navigation, the whole country was connected, and additional motives ſuggeſted to induſtry and improvement.

FROM theſe cauſes Egypt, though not the firſt inhabited, was certainly the firſt civilized country of the world.

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The ASSYRIAN *or* BABYLONIAN *Empire.*

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Boundaries of Aſſyria.

THE boundaries of Aſſyria, according to the deſcription of the Greek and Roman writers, comprehended all the countries and nations between the Mediterranean on the weſt, and the river Indus on the eaſt, and between the deſerts of Scythia on the north, and the ſouthern or Indian ocean. This empire having once extended over ſo large a portion of Aſia, the provinces under its dominion came to be diſtinguiſhed by the name of the ſovereign State, and retained the appellation long after the diſſolution of that great monarchy. Thus Meſopotamia was called Middle Aſſyria; the ſame name was alſo given to Babylon and Chaldea; and, according to Juſtin*, the country of Syria was firſt called Aſſyria.

ASSYRIA Proper, which gave name to the other provinces, was bounded on the north

* Lib. i. cap. ii.

by

by part of Armenia and mount Niphates, on the weſt by the Tigris, on the ſouth by Suſianah, and on the eaſt by Media. In the province of Adiabene, and on the banks of the Tigris, ſtood the celebrated city of Ninus, or Nineveh. Its dimenſions, according to Strabo, exceeded thoſe of Babylon; and we are informed by Diodorus Siculus, that it was forty-ſeven miles in circumference, and ſurrounded by lofty walls and towers, the former a hundred feet in height, the latter two hundred. As this country lies between 33 and 39 degrees of north latitude, in its flouriſhing periods it was remarkable for its fertility, and produced the fruits of the earth in abundant profuſion: But ſince the fall of its empire, having become frequently the ſeat of war, it is now almoſt a wilderneſs, except ſome ſpots of cultivation around its few and inconſiderable towns.

Chaldea described.

BABYLONIA or Chaldea lies between thirty and thirty-five degrees of north latitude, and was bounded on the north by Meſopotamia, on the eaſt by the Tigris, on the weſt by the deſert of Arabia, and on the ſouth by the Perſian gulf, and part of Arabia the Happy. This country enjoys a ſalutary atmoſphere, though extremely noxious at certain ſeaſons

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of the year. Rain ſeldom falls in this climate, and the earth was watered by the river, which was here diffuſed by human induſtry, as the Nile was over Egypt by nature. All the country of Babylon was interſected by canals, the greateſt of which was navigable, and flowed from ſouth to north, from the Euphrates to the Tigris. The engines and wheels which they employed to water their lands were ſo numerous on the banks of the Euphrates, as ſometimes to impede the navigation of the river *. The richneſs of the ſoil, and the excellence of the climate, were improved by the induſtry of the inhabitants; ſo that Herodotus compares this country to Egypt for its fertility. Being irriguous, and for the moſt part low and flat, it abounded with aquatic ſhrubs, and was called the Valley of Willows. The vine, the olive, and the fig-tree, did not flouriſh here; but palms ſprung ſpontaneouſly, chiefly thoſe of the date kind, which ſupplied the inhabitants with food, wine, and honey. For luxuriancy of grain this country is celebrated by Herodotus †. The millet and the ſeſame ſhot up to the ſize of trees; the leaves of the wheat

* Plut. Sympoſ. lib. iii. † Lib. i.

and

and the barley were uſually four fingers broad; and in the language of antiquity, the earth yielded a hundred, and ſometimes three hundred fold. Under the Perſian empire the country of Babylon yielded a third part of the produce of Aſia. This fertility was partly owing to the annual inundations of the Tigris and the Euphrates, which took place in the months of June, July, and Auguſt, by the melting of the ſnow on the Armenian mountains. Canals were cut through all the country, by which the waters were diſtributed, the ſoil enriched, and an eaſy communication effected between diſtant cities. The river Euphrates, from which many channels were cut in the plain of Babylon, has its ſource in the mountains of Armenia; and, after waſhing the eaſtern ſkirts of Syria, and dividing Arabia from Meſopotamia, it proceeds to the ſouth eaſt, and mixing its waters with the Tigris, falls at length into the Perſian gulf. This country is ſuppoſed, by the moſt rational and learned divines, to have incloſed the garden of Eden within it boundaries.

BABEL is the firſt city we find mentioned in ſcripture, and in point of antiquity was prior to that of Nineveh. Theſe two cities were the capitals of two petty kingdoms, and

Riſe of the Aſſyrian empire, ante Ch. 2059.

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continued ſeparate 440 years, governed by diſtinct monarchs, till Ninus conquered the kingdom of Babylon, and laid the foundation of that formidable power which governed Aſia for ſo many ages. This event, which united the two monarchies into one ſtate, under the name of the Aſſyrian empire, happened about 290 years after the flood, 2059 before the Chriſtian era.

Conqueſts of Ninus.

HAVING ſubdued the Babylonians, Ninus began to extend his conqueſts, ſubjected many of the neighbouring ſtates to his power, and, by uniting kingdom to kingdom, enlarged the boundaries of the Aſſyrian empire. Marching from conqueſt to conqueſt, he ſubdued Media, Perſia, Armenia, and in ſeventeen years annexed to his dominions the weſtern kingdoms of Aſia. Having turned his arms againſt Oxyartes, monarch of Bactria, he met with a more vigorous reſiſtance than he had before experienced. After many fruitleſs attempts to reduce the capital of Bactria, he at laſt made himſelf maſter of the place, by the contrivance and conduct of Semiramis, wife of Menon, a captain in his army. The ſpirit and bravery of this heroine charmed the victorious monarch; and with the conſent of her huſband, he made her the partner of his throne

throne and of his bed *. On his return to Nineveh, his queen bore him a ſon, to whom he gave the name of Ninyas; and dying ſoon after, committed the infant prince to the guardianſhip of Semiramis, whom he appointed regent of the empire. CHAP. III.

Reign of Semiramis, A. ante C. 2007.

THIS maſculine and ambitious princeſs followed the footſteps of her huſband, and endeavoured to ſignalize her reign by illuſtrious actions and achievements. She removed her court from Nineveh to Babylon, which ſhe ſurrounded with a wall, and embelliſhed with magnificent ſtructures. Having added ſplendor to the ſeat of her empire, and confirmed her authority over the neighbouring kingdoms, ſhe raiſed a numerous army, and attempted the conqueſt of India. But here ſhe experienced the powerful reſiſtance which was made to Ninus; and after an unſucceſsful war, was obliged to return to Babylon with a ſmall remainder of her forces. Cteſias, Diodorus Siculus, and Trogus Pompeius (abridged by Juſtin) have exaggerated the forces, and embelliſhed the exploits of Ninus and Semiramis; but the exiſtence and ſplendor of the firſt Aſſyrian empire are confirmed

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. Juſtin. lib. i.

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both by ſacred and profane hiſtory: Arrian, Athenæus, Strabo, Suidas, Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, and every judicious enquirer into antiquity, refer to the events and tranſactions of this celebrated monarchy. Plato expreſſed the prevailing opinion of his age, when he affirms, that the kingdom of Troy, during the reign of Priam, was a dependency of the Aſſyrian empire *.

Ninyas aſcends the throne, A. Ch. 1965.

NINYAS aſcended the throne of Aſſyria after the death of Semiramis. As the force of the empire was exhauſted by the ambitious plans and military expeditions of his predeceſſors, he conſulted the tranquillity of his ſubjects, and applied to the arts of peace. He is repreſented by hiſtorians as a feeble and effeminate prince, who ſequeſtered himſelf from the eyes of his ſubjects, and paſſed his days in indolence among eunuchs and women. But it is probable that theſe accounts have originated from a diſpoſition in authors to celebrate a turbulent and warlike reign, if crowned with conqueſts, and to overlook the merits of an adminiſtration employed in the ſilent, but happier arts of peace. But although he did not engage in foreign wars,

* Plato de Legib. lib. iii.

nor

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nor endeavour to enlarge the boundaries of his empire, he took proper precautions to regulate, by wiſe inſtitutions, the extenſive dominions which he inherited from his parents. He eſtabliſhed an army in the capital, which was annually relieved by forces raiſed from other parts of the empire. He committed the government of the provinces to perſons of experienced wiſdom and tried fidelity, to prevent revolts in diſtant countries, and preſerve the public tranquillity. He is ſaid to have affected the ſequeſtered ſtate of diſtant majeſty, which ſucceeding emperors of the eaſt were ambitious to imitate; and became of difficult acceſs, in order to increaſe the veneration of his ſubjects. He ſeems, however, to have ſtrengthened the throne of Ninus, and after a peaceable reign to have tranſmitted his empire to his ſucceſſors, ſo wiſely regulated, as to laſt, in a line of kings of unknown or obſcure fame, for more than eight hundred years.

A blank in the Aſſyrian hiſtory.

FROM Ninus, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Semiramis, to that of Sardanapalus, we find an aſtoniſhing blank in the hiſtory of Aſſyria and Babylon. Tables of the kings who ſwayed the ſceptre during that period are given by

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hiſtorians *; but the records of their reigns are loſt; nothing appears in detail; the annals of Aſſyria are torn from the volumes of hiſtory.

THE obſcurity of this period is commonly attributed to the indolence and effeminacy which the antient Aſſyrian monarchs adopted from Ninyas; but perhaps this ſilence of hiſtorical records is leſs to be aſcribed to the inactivity of theſe princes, than to the tranquillity which the people enjoyed under their government. The virtues of a pacific reign are not ſo ſtriking and ſplendid as the fame of military talents, and the glory of conqueſts. The hiſtory of this antient empire is tranſmitted to us by the Greeks, a reſtleſs and turbulent people, engaged in perpetual commotions, who eſteemed nations only as they were warlike, and who imagined that victories and important revolutions were the only events worthy of being recorded. Lovers of the marvellous, and diſpoſed rather to captivate the imagination than to enlighten the underſtanding, they deſiderated in the Aſſyrian annals thoſe ſhining incidents and illuſtrious achievements which ſtrike the imagination

* Euſeb. Chron. lib. ii. Syncell, p. 103, 108, &c.

and

and fix the attention of the public; prejudiced too in favour of the Egyptians, their preceptors in the arts and ſciences, they wiſhed to confine their knowledge of antiquity to this celebrated people. CHAP. III.

WE ought not, therefore, to imagine that the ſucceſſors to the throne of Ninyas were addicted to the vices of indolence and effeminacy. All the antient hiſtorians acknowledge, that no empire boaſted of ſuch a long duration and uninterrupted proſperity as that of the Aſſyrians. During the courſe of ages no revolution took place: A pacific and happy people eſcaped the records and the crimination of hiſtory.

THE Aſſyrians, after having held the empire of Aſia for many ages, began to decline. During the feeble and voluptuous reign of Sardanapalus the Medes revolted, and their example was followed by other nations. Three kingdoms aroſe from the ruins of this great empire; the monarchy of the Medes, founded by Arbaces, who had conſpired againſt the laſt Aſſyrian king; that of Babylon, ſeized by Beleſus, who had joined in the conſpiracy; and that of Nineveh, called the ſecond empire of the Aſſyrians, whoſe firſt king took the name of Ninus the younger. Fall of the Aſſyrian empire, Ante Ch. 840.

THE

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Second empire of the Aſſyrians.

THE ſecond Aſſyrian empire ſubſiſted with ſome ſplendor after the diſmemberment of the firſt. Nineveh ſtill continued the capital of a great kingdom. The names and actions of the monarchs who filled the throne till its final deſtruction are handed down to poſterity: The ſacred books record the devaſtations they committed in Judea. Pul, the firſt Aſſyrian king who is mentioned in ſcripture, invaded the kingdom of Iſrael during the reign of Menahem, but departed without committing hoſtilities, upon receiving a thouſand talents of ſilver.

Pul, A. C. 777.

Tiglath-Pilezer, A. C. 747.

TIGLATH-PILEZER, his ſucceſſor, attacked the ſame nation; and having reduced Galilee, and the land of Naphtali, carried the inhabitants captive to Aſſyria. At the requeſt of Ahaz, king of Judah, who had become his tributary, he marched into Syria, ſubdued that antient kingdom, tranſplanted its inhabitants to Upper Media, and ſlaying Rezin their king, put an end to the Syrian monarchy.

Salmanaſar, A. C. 727.

AFTER a reign of twenty years, he was ſucceeded by Salmanaſar. Hoſea, the tributary king of Iſrael, reſolving to ſhake off the Aſſyrian yoke, entered into a league with So, king of Egypt; upon which Salmanaſar invaded Samaria with a numerous army: Having

Having ravaged the country, he beſieged the capital, which ſurrendering after a ſiege of three years, he carried the inhabitants into captivity, ſtrangers being ſent from Babylon, and the adjacent cities, to cultivate the territories of the Jews. Thus Syria and Iſrael were annexed to the Aſſyrian empire.

Senacherib. A. C. 712.

SENACHERIB, on his acceſſion to the throne, marched againſt Hezekiah, the king of Judah, with a powerful army, and reduced many of his fortified towns. The interpoſition of providence preſerved Jeruſalem from his fury, by the miraculous deſtruction of his army in one night. This event, though diſguiſed in the narration, is confirmed by Herodotus. Having been ſlain by his two elder ſons, as he was worſhipping in the temple of his god Niſroch, he was ſucceeded by his third ſon, Eſarhaddon or Aſſaradin, who is honourably mentioned in the book of Ezra. He re-eſtabliſhed the power, and enlarged the boundaries of the empire, which, under his father, had fallen to decay. An interregnum happening in the kingdom of Babylon, he improved the opportunity, and united that neighbouring ſtate to his dominions. After he had reigned with great felicity and ſucceſs forty-two years over the Aſſyrians,

Aſſaradin, A. C. 709.

A. C. 688.

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Aſſyrians, and thirteen over the Babylonians, he was ſucceeded by his ſon Saoſduchinus, who in the book of Judith is called Nebuchodonoſor. A few years after his acceſſion to the throne, the Medes, under their king Phraortes, invaded Aſſyria. Collecting a powerful army from the provinces of his extenſive empire, Nebuchodonoſor engaged Phraortes in the great plain of Ragau, totally defeated his army, and taking the monarch priſoner, put him to death. Improving his victory, he reduced many of the cities in Media, ſtormed the celebrated capital, Ecbatana, and levelled it with the ground.

A. C. 667.

In the reign of his ſon Sarac, the Medes, under Cyaxares, the ſon of Phraortes, not only recovered the provinces which the Aſſyrians had lately conquered, but defeated them in a pitched battle, and compelled them to ſhelter themſelves in Nineveh. Sarac having incurred the contempt of his ſubjects by his unwarlike and effeminate character, Nabopalaſſar, commander of the troops in Chaldea, revolted from him, and ſeized on the kingdom of Babylon. Having drawn to his alliance Cyaxares, the Median monarch, they marched againſt Nineveh, which they beſieged, and laid in ruins, Sarac having in deſpair ſet fire

A. C. 606.

to

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Deſtruction of Nineveh.

to his palace, and conſumed himſelf and all his treaſures in the flames. The deſtruction of the capital put an end to the kingdom of Aſſyria*. It fell to riſe no more. The very name of it was loſt. The monarchy was divided between the Babylonians and the Medes; and from this time hiſtory makes no more mention of the Aſſyrians.

THE kingdom of Babylon, which was ſeized by Beleſis after the fall of the firſt Aſſyrian empire, ſubſiſted in ſome ſplendor, in the neighbourhood of its powerful rival. Beleſis was ſucceeded by Nabonaſſar, from whoſe taking poſſeſſion of the throne, commences that famous era known by the name of the era of Nabonaſſar. It correſponds to the 747th year before Chriſt. From this time Babylon was governed by kings of its own. The ambitious and warlike Aſſyrian monarchs, who graſped at the ſovereignty of the eaſt, and waged war with all the nations around them, committed no hoſtilities againſt their Chaldean neighbours, till the reign of Eſarhaddon, their fifth king. From the harmony that reigned between theſe neighbouring kingdoms, it is probable that they were governed by princes

* Herodot. lib. i. cap. 106.

of

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of the ſame family, the younger branch at Babylon acknowledging a kind of ſubjection to the elder at Nineveh. During an interregnum that took place after the ſixth ſucceſſor of Nabonaſſar, Aſſaraddin king of Aſſyria took poſſeſſion of Babylon, and the kingdoms became united: In the reign of Sarac, as we have already mentioned, Nabopolaſſar, the governor of Babylon, having entered into an alliance with Cyaxares the Mede, Nineveh was deſtroyed, and the ſeat of empire transferred to Babylon. Nabopalaſſar advancing in years, aſſociated his ſon Nebuchadnezzar as his partner in the throne. This warlike and ambitious prince, aſſembling a powerful army, marched againſt the Egyptians at Carchemiſh; and having recovered that city, put the garriſon to the ſword. He then marched againſt Judea, took Jeruſalem, plundered the temple, and made Jehoiakim priſoner; but upon his ſubmiſſion to his authority, and promiſe of paying an annual tribute, he reinſtated him on the throne; then purſuing his conqueſts, he reduced all Paleſtine, to the borders of Egypt. Succeeding to the ſole poſſeſſion of the throne, at the death of his father, he applied himſelf to extend his conqueſts, as well as to ſecure thoſe that he had made. The tributary king

of

of Jeruſalem having revolted, and entered into an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra, or Apries, king of Egypt; Nebuchadnezzar aſſembled an army, and marching into Judea, in a few days became maſter of the whole kingdom, except Lachiſh, Azekah, and Jeruſalem. Having beſieged the capital, he took it by ſtorm; and plundering the temple, the palace, and the treaſury, he carried the inhabitants captives to Babylon, and put an end to the Jewiſh monarchy. CHAP. III. Ante C. N. 587. Jeruſalem taken.

On the twenty-firſt year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Syria, and ſat down with his army before Tyre; but after a thirteen years ſiege, he found an evacuated city, the inhabitants having retired to a neighbouring iſland. From Tyre he marched into Egypt, and having made a conqueſt of that country, brought from thence an immenſe booty, and an incredible number of captives. About the ſame time he extended his arms to the Ethiopians and Libyans, and ſubdued thoſe nations *. Conqueſt of Egypt.

Having obtained a name in arms, beyond any of his predeceſſors, this victorious monarch now fought the leſs ſplendid, but more

* Ezek. xxx. 4.

uſeful

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uſeful glory of arts; improved and embelliſhed the capital of that empire, the boundaries of which he had extended; and inveſting Babylon with new ſplendor, made it one of the wonders of the world.

Deſcription of Babylon.

THE great works that defended, adorned, and have immortalized that celebrated capital of the eaſtern world, are aſcribed to Nebuchadnezzar and Nitocris his ſpouſe, by Beroſus *, Megaſthenes †, and Herodotus ‡; and their teſtimony is confirmed by the authority of ſacred ſcripture. The moſt famed of theſe magnificent monuments were the walls of the city, the temple of Belus, the hanging gardens, the bridge, and the banks of the river, with the artificial lake and canals.

The walls of Babylon.

AS the civilized nations of Aſia were in the neighbourhood of barbarous and wander-hordes, who frequently ſallied from their wilds and deſerts to ravage the cultivated plains, it became abſolutely neceſſary, before monarchs had eſtabliſhed revenues and ſtanding armies, to provide for the defence of the kingdom againſt theſe foreign invaders. The moſt natural and obvious plan for this purpoſe

* Joſeph. adv. Appian. lib. i. cap. 3.
† Euſeb. Preparat. lib. ix. cap. 41.
‡ Lib. i. p. 185.

was

was that of fortification, by high and impregnable walls. As the early kingdoms of the eaſt conſiſted only of one city *, and its environs, and as theſe were generally fortified, when kingdoms began to enlarge, and capitals to encreaſe, the ſame mode of defence was adopted. Nineveh and Babylon were not cities, in the modern ſenſe of the word, but rather fortified provinces, which contained gardens, arable ground, paſture for cattle, and every thing requiſite for the ſubſiſtence of the inhabitants. The wall of China, which ſtill ſubſiſts, and even makes a figure in the map of the world, may ſerve as a ſpecimen of theſe fortifications, which in antient times were not confined to the circumference of a city.

Nineveh. Nineveh, according to Diodorus †, formed an oblong ſquare, the two greater ſides of which extended to a hundred and fifty ſtadia, or furlongs, in length, and the two leſſer to ninety; the total circuit was conſequently four hundred and eighty ſtadia, or ſixty miles. The expreſſion uſed by the prophet Jonah, "that Nineveh was a great city of three days journey," juſtifies this deſcription of profane hiſtorians, while at the ſame time the

* Quot urbes, tot regna. † Lib. ii. p. 115.

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prophet gives us grounds to conclude, that this capital was not peopled in proportion to the extent of its walls. Children make a fifth part of the inhabitants of a city; and as theſe in Nineveh amounted only to a hundred and twenty thouſand, the population becomes limited to ſix hundred thouſand, inferior to that of Paris or of London, though the boundaries were ſix times more extenſive.

Babylon.

BABYLON, according to Herodotus *, who beheld the remains of its ſplendor, was equal in compaſs to Nineveh; but as it formed a perfect ſquare, contained a greater extent of ground. The outward wall was three hundred feet high, ſeventy-five broad, extending ſixty miles in circumference, and ſurrounded by a deep ditch, continually ſupplied with water. Behind this extraordinary bulwark was another of almoſt equal dimenſions. Theſe walls formed an exact ſquare, each ſide of which was fifteen miles in length: They were built of large bricks, cemented together with bitumen, a glutinous ſlime which iſſues out of the earth in that country, and in a ſhort time grows harder than the very ſtone

* Lib. i. p. 178.

ſtone

ſtone which it cements. In every ſide of this great ſquare were twenty-five gates, that is, a hundred in all, formed of ſolid braſs. Between every two of theſe gates, at proper diſtances, were three towers, and four more at the four corners of the great ſquare, each ten feet higher than the walls. As ſome parts of the walls were built on a moraſs, and inacceſſible by an enemy, the labour and expence of rearing turrets were ſpared, ſo that the whole number of the towers amounted only to two hundred and fifty. From the twenty-five gates in each ſide of this great ſquare, went twenty-five ſtreets, in ſtraight lines to the oppoſite gates, each fifteen miles long, and croſſing at right angles. Four ſtreets, alſo, went round the city, next to the walls, two hundred feet broad, having houſes on one ſide, and the walls on the other. By the interſection of the fifty ſtreets, the city was divided into ſix hundred and ſeventy-ſix ſquares, each two miles and a quarter in compaſs. Round theſe ſquares, on every ſide towards the ſtreets, ſtood the houſes, three or four ſtories in height, and beautified with all manner of ornaments. The large void ſpace in the middle of each ſquare was employed for the purpoſes of gardening and agriculture.

CHAP. III.

ON each ſide of the river ſtood a magnificent palace; the old palace on the eaſt ſide, and the new palace, which was built by Nebuchadnezzar, on the weſt, the former of which was four miles, and the latter eight, in circumference. The temple of Belus, which was ſituated near the old palace, was compoſed of eight towers placed one above another, diminiſhing as they aſcended in the form of a pyramid. According to Herodotus it was a ſquare of a furlong on each ſide, and according to Strabo a furlong in height. This tower exceeded the higheſt of the Egyptian pyramids by a hundred and ſeventy-nine feet, though it fell ſhort of its breadth at the baſes by thirty-three. The way to aſcend was by ſtairs around it on the outſide, whence it is probable that the whole aſcent was, by the benching in, drawn in a ſloping line from the bottom to the top, eight times round it, which gave it the appearance of eight towers, one above the other. Till the time of Nebuchadnezzar this tower was all the temple of Belus; but as he enlarged or adorned the other antient buildings of the city, ſo he likewiſe made additions to this, by vaſt edifices erected round it, in a ſquare of two furlongs on every ſide. Theſe buildings were incloſed by

Temple of Belus.

CHAP. III.

by a wall, which is ſuppoſed to have extended round one of the great ſquares of the city. Over the whole, on the top of the tower, was an obſervatory, by the benefit of which the Chaldees purſued their aſtronomical diſcoveries.

THE riches incloſed in the temple of Belus correſponded to its prodigious extent. Without mentioning the tables and cenſers, the cups and other ſacred vaſes of maſſy gold, there was a golden ſtatue forty feet high *, which weighed a thouſand Babyloniſh talents, and was worth three millions and a half of our money. Xerxes demoliſhed this temple, and Alexander the Great undertook to rebuild it. He attempted to clear the place and remove the ruins. Ten thouſand workmen, who were employed for two months in theſe operations, were unable to accompliſh them †. Such is the idea which the antients have given us of this magnificent temple.

* This however was exceeded by the image erected on the plains of Dura, which, according to Daniel, was ſixty cubits, or ninety feet, in height.

† Strabo, lib. xvii. Arrian. Epedit. Alexand. lib. vii. p. 480.

CHAP. III.

The hanging-gardens.

AMONG the wonders of Babylon, Diodorus and Strabo rank the hanging-gardens, which Nebuchadnezzar is ſuppoſed to have conſtructed to gratify his ſpouſe Amyite, daughter to Aſtyages, king of Media, who retaining a paſſionate attachment to the mountains and foreſts of her native country, wiſhed to behold the reſemblance of them at Babylon. But the ſilence of Herodotus, who had carefully viſited Babylon, on a work ſo ſingular and romantic, and the doubtful manner in which Quintus Curtius expreſſes himſelf on this ſubject, are ſufficient to ſhew, that theſe gardens owed their chief embelliſhment to the imagination of the Greeks.

THE bridge, with the artificial lake and the canals, will be conſidered afterwards, when an account will be given of the progreſs of the arts and ſciences among the Chaldeans.

THE number of victories obtained by Nebuchadnezzar, the extent of his conqueſts, and the magnificence of his capital, began at laſt to intoxicate his mind. Contemplating the glories of that city, which was the work of his own hands, he exclaimed in the pride of his heart, "*Is not this great Babylon which*

I have built for the houſe of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majeſty?" No ſooner had he uttered this inſolent boaſt, than "the kingdom departed from him;" his pride terminated in a ſtate of infanity; he was driven from the ſociety of men, and dwelt with the beaſts of the field.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Form of Government, Religion, Sciences, Arts, Manners, and Cuſtoms, of the BABYLONIANS.

CHAP. IV.

THE government of this nation was monarchical, or rather deſpotic, and the crown hereditary. To render the ſubmiſſion of the people more reſpectful, the proud monarchs of Babylon affected divine honours, and retired from the public eye. The adminiſtration of public affairs was committed to officers, divided into three claſſes, and choſen from the nobility, the moſt reſpected for their wiſdom and abilities *. The firſt had the charge of the virgins, and of their diſpoſal in marriage; the ſecond took cognizance of thefts; and the third of all other crimes. The ſubordinate powers under the great king were divided into princes, governors, captains, judges, treaſurers, and counſellors, who preſerved order in the empire, and regulated the

* Strabo, lib. xvi.

civil